

Traditional Environmental Values

- Air, Water, land and celestial are sacred.
- Natural resources not for exploitation.
- Four sacred mountains and waterways demarcate traditional homelands
- Maintaining harmony with Mother Earth and other living creatures is paramount

Navajo Language

- Athabaskan Family of Languages
- Related to Apache & other languages in Alaska and Canada
- Languages dictate world order and the philosophy of a people

Navajo Social Structure

- Matrilinear society vs patrilinear
- Clan system shows common ancestry
- Clan system dictate marriage and relationships
- Clans originate with places, plants and other groups (native and others)
- Originally there were 4 clans – today there may be 100 clans – extinction/ new ones

Changes that Challenge Community Involvement Work

- Language and culture loss affect Navajo language.
(Traditional healing practices and belief system practiced by less people).
- Historically, Navajo people have been very adaptable and were able to survive
- Limitations of Navajo language for science & technological advances in predominant world (ex. Radium , radiation, uranium, half life)
- Federal environmental policies fail to address rural nations (ex. CERCLA & Cleanup driven by Hazardous Ranking System

Contemporary Demographics

- Population : 200,000
- Youth comprise over 50% of population
- 45 % lack safe drinking water & plumbing
- 70% live at or below the poverty level
- US government has a trust relationship with Navajo – protects & harms progress
- Trust status of land deters economic vitality

Harmony & Balance within Environment Was Critical

- Cultural beliefs and values enhance the goals and objectives of NNEPA
- Navajo Legal System recognized ‘fundamental law’ based on tribal concepts
- Legal System developed and uses traditional dispute resolution methods

Tuba City L.U.S.T. Community Involvement

- USTs at 2 gas stations leaked 1300 gallons of gas in at an intersection in Tuba City (Hopi lands)
- 9/2000 - gas stations installed cleanup systems that removed 3,300 lbs of petroleum in 6 months
- 2002 additional cleanup systems were installed
- Stakeholders included: TC Chapter, Upper & Lower Moencopi, USEPA, NNEPA and Hopi Environmental Protection
- Cleanup on Navajo lands is 90% complete

Northeast Church Rock Mine Site Community Involvement

- Five NECR families in Coyote Canyon Chapter
affected by soil contamination
- Temporarily lodged in Gallup
- Small intimate meetings / telephone calls
- Families worked with cleanup crew & USEPA and contractors
- Cleanup began May 7 and ended June 7

Community Involvement in Environmental Protection

- Community Involvement requires deep commitment for a clean / safe environment for future (I.e. longterm) for relatives & your children
- Community Involvement is done to respect Navajo customs and philosophy / perpetuate culture.
- Community Involvement has to be done Navajo language.
- Community Involvement is important because US & tribal government failed to do this in past.

Community Involvement Is Part of Bigger Picture in Navajo

- Community Involvement recognizes dignity and connection of people to land
- Community Involvement establishes relations and solidifies the social networks of Nation
- Respect for people – traditional concept of compassion
- Trust is a bigger challenge – be honest / flexible
- Teaches, educates and empowers
- If CI is done within cultural context, success is possible

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